

Let's Act Union

What Sort of Union Is the I.W.W. Asking You to Build?

There are many unions in this country but not enough unionism.

There is proof of that in the miserable wages and working conditions of those who provide this country with its food. There is proof in long workdays three generations and a million inventions after the 8-hour day was won. There is proof when those with steady jobs fear that they may lose them. There is proof in the way that workers are pitted against each other across the work bench, across the world.

We need the unionism that unites us. To get it, we must build it.

To build it, act union. Resist all attempts to use you against your fellow workers. Don't help the boss speed them up. Don't help cut their pay. Don't make them wonder whether it is safe to be union and act union.

Is your fellow worker weary of being a cog in a machine? Does he or she want to act human on the job? Don't make your fellow worker feel out of line — act human too.

When you are hunting for a job, and see people hard at work, don't stand gaping at them. It may make them feel that they have to work harder to hold their job — and that makes it harder for you to find one.

To act union is to act for your own good by acting for the good of your fellow workers as a group. It is the sure way to win.

To act union is to show consideration for your fellow workers. Good unionists try to turn their jobs into places where they and their fellow workers can do their work well and at the same time enjoy the job and enjoy each other's company. They want sanitation facilities kept sanitary, drinking places kept decent, health and safety practices observed. They do their own bit to keep them that way. By their action they disprove any argument that workers don't want to bother

with good conditions. When they and their fellow workers win something good, they don't want to spoil it.

No union official miles away from the job can make it agreeable. That needs union practice on the job. Nothing much can be done for us, but by acting union we can do much for ourselves. We can even leave our children a good world.

The good unionist is much concerned about the worst jobs, for the conditions there are the base above which all better conditions are built.

On many of those worst jobs, some workers are quitting and some are starting almost every day. If some were to quit a few days earlier and some were to quit a few days later than they had planned, they could quit in bunches. They could do this without much inconvenience to themselves. If they are asked why they are quitting, and they pointed to some grievance that is easy to remedy, they may get it taken care of and find it better to stay. To systematize the quitting practice in this way and to use it to improve conditions is not calling a strike. Those who quit in bunches are not telling others to stay away from the job they left. It is a way to press for better conditions on "come and go" jobs without incurring the troubles and sacrifices that strikes often require. Leave strikes for situations where nothing else will work.

Strikes are the worker's last resort, and to be used only after serious deliberation in union meetings. If bunched-up quitting does not win something for you at the job you are leaving, it may make the job better for the next crew that takes it, and very likely will. By the same token you may find conditions better on the job you move to because of the way those who were on it before you left it.

These are a few examples of what we mean when we say "Let's Act Union." Without acting union, your payment of union dues cannot build unionism. But trying to act union without building a union does not work either. We need the combination. Build the sort of union that expects us to act union and that helps us to do so.

We want the sort of union where all on the same job will be in the same union; where all in the same industry will be in the same industrial unions; where eventually all in the working class everywhere will be helping each other in **The Industrial Workers of the World**.

This is not a union run by some leader who tells you what he will do for you. It is a device by which you and your fellow workers can do together what you want to do but cannot do alone. Whether you join us now or not, we ask you to give a powerful lot of thought to how you can act union.

Who May Join?

Any wage earner* may carry an IWW card. No worker is barred because of race, religion, nationality, or sex.

It is *not*, however, an organization for scissorbills, for cowards, for those who substitute words for action. It does not want those who are content to unquestioningly follow leaders.

The IWW is a union for men and women, for the best and most intelligent — and growing numbers of such workers are securing IWW cards. They want to help build the union which will rebuild the world.

The IWW needs them, and they need the IWW.

Who Belongs Now?

Some of the best and most capable unionists are already members of the IWW. They are veterans of many a bitter struggle for improved wages and conditions; rebels against an unjust social order who freely offer their hearts and brains to make labor's bright dream of a better world come true. They are men and women whom one is proud to know; people who will fight, whatever the odds, until the battle is won.

Some of the best are not enough. The IWW needs them all. And, equally, all who are struggling for the better world that we can have will find they need the IWW.

* No unemployed or retired worker, no working class student, apprentice, or housewife shall be excluded from membership on the grounds that he or she is not currently receiving wages.

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

2440 N. Lincoln, Chicago, Ill. 60614

- ☐ *I want further information about joining the IWW.*
- ☐ *I am unemployed right now.*
- ☐ *The job I work on is not organized.*
- ☐ *My job is organized under _____
but I wish to join the IWW as an individual member.*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the every-day struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.